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An investigation of organizational trust level of teachers according to some variables

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate organizational trust of teachers in terms of variables of gender, experience, and teaching subject. It was investigated whether these variables would cause a significant difference in organizational trust level of teachers. Organizational trust used as dependent variable in this study. Independent variables were gender, experience and teaching subject. This study was conducted in Denizli during 2007-2008 academic year. The sample consisted of 354 elementary school teachers. To collect data, “Personal Information Form” and “Omnibus T Scale (OTS)” developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003), were used. In this study, statistical techniques such as standard deviation, mean, t-test and the one way analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Results showed that there was no significant difference by gender but there were significant differences by experience and teaching subject in organizational trust level of teachers.

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1. Introduction

Organizations' existence depends on its effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness is the organization's ability to carry out its purpose. Efficiency of organization is its capacity to offer effective inducements in sufficient quantity (Barnard, 1982). To achieve goal attainment, organizations must use human resources effectively and develop positive relationships. Trust is a highly important ingredient in the long term stability of the organization (Cook and Wall, 1980). Organizational literature supports that trust is an essential element for effective organizations (Hoy, Tarter and Witkoskie, 1992; Kremer & Tyler, 1996 in: Hartzler, 2003; Darrough, 2006; Cunningham & Gresso, 1993; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Organizational theorists have been writing about the importance of organizational trust for decades. Theorists such as McGregor, Argyris and Likert have supported the idea of trust importance in their study (Dammen, 2001).

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Gibbs (1972: 157) defined organizational trust as “*an atmosphere in which people have reciprocal feelings of confidence, warmth and acceptance*”.

Mayer, Davis and Schhoorman (1995) defined organizational trust as “*the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party*”.

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) defined organizational trust as “*an individual’s or group’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open*”. For the purpose of the study, this definition will be study, because it can be applied to the study of educational organizations.

There are at least five facets of trust that can be gleaned from the literature on trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness are all elements of trust.

- *Benevolence—confidence that one’s well being will be protected by trusted party.*
- *Reliability—the extent to which one can count on another person or group.*
- *Competency—the extent to which the trusted party has knowledge and skill.*
- *Honesty—the character, integrity, and authenticity of the trusted party.*
- *Openness—the extent to which there is no withholding of information from others.* (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003: 8).

According to Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003), faculty trust has four aspects: In colleagues, principal, student and parent. Trust in students and trust in parents were combined as a faculty trust in clients.

Trust in clients: Tschannen-Moran (2004) indicated that “*when principals, teachers, students and parents trust each other and work together cooperatively, a climate of success is likely.*” Building trust in clients (students and parents) is necessary and vital for student achievement and school success.

Trust in colleagues: A school with high trust in colleagues contributes teamwork (Douglas, 1992). Teachers rely on the honesty of their colleagues and depend on them for support in these schools. Also high trust in colleagues contributes positive teacher morale (Scarborough, 2006).

Trust in principal: A school with a low level of trust in principal is described by a staff suspicious of change. In these schools, the principal will be unable to integrate the teachers behind a common strong sense of their contributions. But, a school with high level of trust in principal has teachers who are willing to ask questions, search for understandings and take risks (Douglas, 1992).

The purpose of this study is to determine the organizational trust level of elementary school teachers based on variables of gender, experience, and teaching subject.. For this purpose, following research questions were developed:

Is there a significant difference by gender in the teachers’ level of “total trust”, “trust in colleagues”, “trust in clients”, “trust in principal”?

Is there a significant difference by experience in the teachers’ level of “total trust”, “trust in colleagues”, “trust in clients”, “trust in principal”?

Is there a significant difference by teaching subject in the teachers’ level of “total trust”, “trust in colleagues”, “trust in clients”, “trust in principal”?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The population of this study consists of 2965 teachers working for elementary schools during 2007-2008 academic year in Denizli. By employing Cochran (1962)’s formula proposed for stratified random sampling 354 elementary school teachers have been chosen as a sample of this study. To find out an appropriate sample size to represent the population, the table generated by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) and reprinted by Gay (1996) was used. The representation of this sample for the population is % 11.94.

2.2. Instrument

Developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003), the “Omnibus T Scale” was used to determine organizational trust. This instrument contains 26 items and 3 dimensions. The reliability coefficient of original instrument was .960 (Cronbach Alpha). Ozer and colleagues (2006) translated the instrument into Turkish and performed factor analysis. The reliability coefficient of translated instrument was found as .860. As in the original version, the Turkish instrument includes 3 dimensions of trust: “Trust in colleagues” and “Trust in clients (students and parents)”, “Trust in principal”, but contains 20 items. The dimension of trust in colleagues contains 7 items, trust in clients contains 8 items and trust in principal contains 5 items. Items were rated on a Likert type scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). For the sample of this study, Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficient was found .890.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

The data was analyzed by the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. In this study, the statistical techniques such as standard deviation, mean, t-test and the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used in order to investigate organizational trust level of teachers according to variables of gender, experience and teaching subject. Significance level for analyzing the data was selected as .05.

3. Results

The first research question was “Is there a significant difference by gender in the teachers’ level of “total trust”, “trust in colleagues”, “trust in clients”, “trust in principal”? In Table 1, results of t test showed that no significant gender difference in the teachers’ level of “total trust”, “trust in colleagues”, “trust in clients”, “trust in principal” was found.

Table 1. Organizational trust level of teachers by gender (t test)

	Gender	n	\bar{X}	Sd	t	p
trust in colleagues	Female	169	27.34	4.24	-.323	.747*
	Male	185	27.49	4.42		
trust in clients	Female	169	25.92	5.21	-.272	.786*
	Male	185	26.06	4.99		
trust in principal	Female	169	19.25	4.58	-1.674	.095*
	Male	185	20.01	3.93		
Total trust	Female	169	72.50	10.95	-.933	.352*
	Male	185	73.56	10.42		

*p>.05

As shown in Table 2, there was a significant difference by experience in organizational trust level of teachers (total trust). When we applied Tukey HSD test to determine a significant difference between which groups, it was found that mean scores of teachers with “16 years and over” of experience have higher than teachers with “6 – 10 years” of experience. Also, another significant difference was found in teachers’ level of “trust in clients (students and parents)”. According to findings, teachers with “1-5 years” of experience have lower mean values than teachers with “11-15 years” and teachers with “16 years and over” of experience in “trust in clients”. There were no differences by experience in teachers’ level of “trust in colleagues” and “trust in principal”.

Table 2. Organizational trust level of teachers by experience (One way ANOVA)

	<i>Experience</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
trust in colleagues	1-5 years	24	27.92	4.07	1.538	.234
	6-10 years	72	26.46	4.02		
	11-15 years	66	27.50	5.34		
	16 years and over	192	27.68	4.06		
	Total	354	27.42	4.33		
trust in clients	1-5 years	24	22.42	4.25	6.347	.000*
	6-10 years	72	25.11	5.06		
	11-15 years	66	26.08	5.19		
	16 years and over	192	26.74	4.95		
	Total	354	25.99	5.09		
trust in principal	1-5 years	24	19.33	4.20	1.700	.167
	6-10 years	72	18.72	4.94		
	11-15 years	66	20.21	4.51		
	16 years and over	192	19.84	3.87		
	Total	354	19.65	4.26		
Total trust	1-5 years	24	69.67	8.31	3.412	.018*
	6-10 years	72	70.29	10.34		
	11-15 years	66	73.79	12.90		
	16 years and over	192	74.27	9.99		
	Total	354	73.06	10.67		

*P<.05

Finally, to determine organizational trust level of teachers according to the variable of teaching subject, results in table 3 were analysed. According to these results, there was a significant difference by teaching subject in organizational trust level of teachers (total trust). Mean scores of primary school teachers were higher than secondary school teachers. Also, there was a significant difference in teachers’ level of “trust in clients (students and parents)”. In terms of trust in students and parents, primary school teachers have higher scores than secondary

school teachers. There were no significant differences between primary and secondary school teachers in their level of “trust in colleagues” and “trust in principal”.

Table 3. Organizational trust level of teachers by teaching subject (t test)

	Teaching subject	n	\bar{X}	Sd	t	p
trust in colleagues	Primary school teachers	213	27.46	4.57	.239	.811
	Secondary school teachers	141	27.35	3.95		
trust in clients	Primary school teachers	213	26.53	4.85	2.431	.016*
	Secondary school teachers	141	25.19	5.35		
trust in principal	Primary school teachers	213	20.02	3.87	1.945	.053
	Secondary school teachers	141	19.09	4.75		
Total trust	Primary school teachers	213	74.00	10.63	2.064	.040*
	Secondary school teachers	141	71.62	10.61		

* $P < .05$

4. Discussion

The main results of this study indicated that there was no significant difference by gender in the teachers' level of organizational trust. These finding was consistent with Scott (1983), Gilbert and Tang (1998) and, Daley and Vasu (1998)'s researches. Scott (1983), found that there were no trust differences between men and women towards management. Gilbert and Tang (1998) concluded that organizational trust did not differ by gender. Daley and Vasu (1998) found that employee attitudes of organizational trust toward those in top management positions exhibit no substantive effect. In Turkey, Ozdil (2005) found that there was no significant difference by gender in “trust in colleagues” and “trust in principal”. Also, Bokeoglu and Yılmaz (2008) found no significant difference by gender in organizational trust of teachers.

According to the variable of experience, mean values of teachers with 16 years and over have higher than teachers with 6 – 10 years of experience in the level of organizational trust. It can be said that teachers who are working for 16 years and over trust school organization more than teachers working for 6-10 years. We can say that when teachers' seniority increases, the level of their organizational trust is expected to increase as well. It can be inferred from this finding that time is an important element for organizational trust of teachers. The more teachers' work experience increases, the more they may share more values and vision.

Similarly, teachers working for 11-15 years and teachers working for 16 years and over have higher mean values than teachers with 1-5 years in “trust in clients”. Also, results found that there were no significant differences by experience in teachers' level of “trust in colleagues” and “trust in principal”. These finding was consistent with Ozdil (2005). Besides this, Sonmez (2005) found no significant difference by seniority in the level of primary school teachers' trust for their principals.

Another finding of this study found significant difference between primary and secondary school teachers towards organizational trust and trust in clients. Primary school teachers have higher scores than secondary school

teachers in terms of total trust and trust in students and parents. According to this result, we can say that primary schools have more positive climate of trust than secondary schools.

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